

Big Government Provides Safe Haven for Future Terrorists

(A Rebuttal to Sen. Charles Schumer)
By J.J. Johnson - Sierra Times Editor-in-Chief 12.20.01

There are always two sides to any argument.

In a recent Washington Post editorial Senator Charles "Chuck" Schumer (D-NY) poses a question that has been debated since the Federalist Papers: "How big should the federal government be?"

Senator Schumer then attempts to use the acts of war of September 11 to make his case that ["Big Government Looks Better Now."](#) He argues that the Reagan era brought to a close a period of uninterrupted growth of federal bureaucracy, which had been burgeoning since 1912. As an unceasing proponent of Big Government, he then tries to convince us that Bigger Government equals more effective protection against terrorism. In shilling for Bigger Government, Schumer carefully ignores the explosion of Big Government during the Clinton/Gore administration, as well as the Clinton/Gore administration's complicity in setting the stage for the terrorist attacks of September 11th.

"Never mind Monica. Never mind the impeachment. America is living – day to day, and for many years to come -- with the former president's fecklessness regarding international terrorism, too. Clinton promised to track down the architects of bombings at the World Trade Center (1993), Khobar Towers (1996), American embassies in Africa (1998) and USS Cole (2000) -- and he didn't. This sent a signal that U.S. interests at home and abroad were open to attack. The Clinton administration also determined that the CIA should not use sources that had 'dirty hands' -- i.e., individuals with possible criminal or human rights violations in their past. Soon it had no significant sources at all. In other words, the man's lack of self-control caused him to ignore his primary responsibility --keeping America and its citizens safe. And the price of that irresponsibility is being paid now." (New York Post)

There is also hard evidence, reported recently in the Los Angeles Times, that President Clinton, whom Senator Schumer staunchly defended throughout his sordid presidency, and whose wife is the other Senator from Schumer's home state, could have captured Osama Bin Laden, but instead refused the offer of Sudan to hand Bin Laden over to the United States.

Finally, there is this fact: Terrorist pilot Mohammed Atta blew up a bus in Israel in 1986. The Israelis captured, tried and imprisoned him. As part of the Oslo agreement with the Palestinians in 1993, Israel had to agree to release so-called "political prisoners." However, the Israelis would not release any prisoners with "blood on their hands." Bill Clinton, and his Secretary of State, Warren Christopher, "insisted" that all prisoners be released. Thus Mr. Atta was freed and eventually "thanked the US" by flying an airplane into Tower One of the World Trade Center.

This was reported by many of the American TV networks at the time that the terrorists were first identified.

Avoiding all these pesky details about the failure of the Big Government of the previous Democratic administration to protect the United States against terrorism, Schumer writes, *"September 11th awakened us to the reality that technology has enabled a small group of diabolical people living halfway around the globe to make large parts of our society vulnerable to attack. For the first time, we are engaged in a war in which more Americans are likely to die on the home front than on the battlefield. As a result, we are at the beginning of a process of recalibration, where preparation for physical security will take a great deal more of our time and resources at both a personal and societal level."*

I completely agree with these statements. But Schumer's argument that more Big Government can make us all more secure is not convincing. As history has repeatedly shown us, just because a government is bigger and more centralized doesn't make its decisions and actions automatically benign and protective to its citizens.

In fact, Big Government's avoidance of the terrorist threat goes way back: In 1980, it was Ronald Reagan who called Osama Bin Laden a "freedom fighter." For over a decade, "Big Government" made it a point to provide such federal-government-approved "freedom fighters" with weapons against the Tyrannical Soviet Empire. But from the late 80s forward, Big Government had little interest in a needed policy of weapons control regarding rogue nations and groups hostile to the United States; instead Big Government has for decades turned such weapons-control policies inward upon its own citizens: the American public.

Regrettably, Mr. Schumer has been a leader in Washington in this assault upon the freedoms and rights of Americans. He has been one of the most virulent attackers of the Second Amendment of the Bill of Rights, and upon the rights of individual citizens to defend themselves and their country.

Silent are all but a few voices in Washington about protecting the right of Americans to self-defense. Few are the voices pointing out that the horrors of September 11th might never have happened if such constitutional rights had been practiced at least among the crewmembers of the doomed flights. As columnist Mark Steyn pointed out, the doomed flights of September 11th were totally gun-free – a Big-Government-mandated environment. Senator Schumer and his Big Government buddies have been pushing for years for the entire country to be made over in this image.

Yes, our society will have to examine the vulnerable pressure points in our country: Air travel, nuclear power plants, public health systems, power and computer grids, border crossings. And we shall have to work to protect all of these from terrorist attack, as the Senator stated.

But such protection is not just the responsibility of "Big Government" – and neither can Big Government by itself be trusted to protect us from further attack. In fact, America saw a direct hit taken by what we trusted to be our national defense headquarters - the Pentagon itself. America and the world saw how much protection against enemies both foreign and domestic Big government could provide on September 11th, 2001.

We are still clearing the rubble - three months later.

In defiance of Mr. Schumer's position that Big Government is the answer to terrorism, many Americans responded with a healthy increase in firearm purchases, gas masks, antibiotics, and a great awareness that "we the people," and not just Big Government, must provide security for ourselves and our families, as well as for our nation as a whole. In fact, it was not Big Government, but regular Americans on Flight 93, who rose to the occasion, sparing

Washington – possibly even Senator Schumer himself - from more death and destruction. This phenomenon of individual Americans heeding the call to duty in defense of their nation must never be discounted, or forgotten.

In a contrary position to a growing federal government in times of such emergency, President Bush stated in a November 8th Atlanta speech, *"We will ask state and local officials to create a new modern civil defense service, similar to local volunteer fire departments, to respond to local emergencies when the manpower of governments is stretched thin."* However Senator Schumer proposes that the federal government is the only the entity that *"has the breadth, strength and resources to lead this recalibration and pay"* for costs of securing a nation.

According to the President and many other Americans, this simply is not true.

True, the borders need tightening. But local law enforcement and citizens trying to do this job are still left shorthanded and shortchanged by the federal bureaucracy. There are calls from both sides of the aisle for Americans to become more self-sufficient and not depend on foreign resources. Yet Big Government is still engaged in placing environmental policies over domestic agriculture oil production and harvest of natural resources – all of which are needed to supply any lengthy war campaign.

Americans are also concerned about isolated terrorist attacks such as those that all too often occur in Israel. But federal regulations too often prevent law-abiding citizens armed with the necessary self-defense tools from thwarting such attacks. In short, many of the current policies of our present federal Big Government leave Americans vulnerable to more terrorist attacks.

As the fights against massive electronic surveillance, military tribunals, and warrantless searches are on going from a large segment of the population (some even led by Mr. Schumer's colleagues), the question of how much, and what kind of, Big Government is needed is indeed deserving of a debate, and should be rigorously questioned by the last line of defense against terrorism – the American people. We must never forget the words of Benjamin Franklin who warned us about trading liberty for security and winding up with neither.

As it is the duty of the federal government to provide National Security, we must never lose sight that without the personal security and individual responsibility of American citizens, there can be no genuine National Security. As far as Senator Schumer is concerned, I find it very disturbing that a man who has always lobbied for Bigger Government and against individual rights and responsibilities would use the deaths of thousands of his own constituents to further his cause.

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